



## GREENS~LEAVES

Dunedin Vegetable Growers Club Newsletter  
December 2023

**Meetings:** 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month, 7pm  
**Venue:** Dunedin Lawn Bowl Stadium,  
 38 Tahuna Rd, Lawyers Head, Dunedin  
**Membership:** Helen Flockton - phone  
 0274222364 [helen.flockton6@gmail.com](mailto:helen.flockton6@gmail.com)  
**Club Email:** [dvgcnz@gmail.com](mailto:dvgcnz@gmail.com)  
**Website:** <http://dvgc.co.nz/>  
**Bank Account #** 030905051590600  
 (Please include your name as a reference)

**Next Club Meeting: Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**Q & A:** Sue

**Club Talk:** Alan Savell – ‘Harvesting Blackcurrants’

**Club potato in a bucket competition and Xmas supper**

**Garden visit:** Emma Brown, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, East Taieri



**December competition:**

Potato in a bucket

**November competition winner:**

Marion Thomas - Savoy Cabbage

**Things to look forward to in December:**

Garden visit

Xmas supper

DVGC Xmas function

Hello Everyone,

Please note: the **DVGC January club meeting** will be held on **January 10<sup>th</sup>**

In this newsletter we have the monthly growing guide, a couple of items pertaining to the last club talk and ‘speech’ and reports on two garden visits. We introduce you to more perennial plants and ask for donations of plants and produce for the DVGC Gasworks Market stall, also for our sales table. We warmly invite you to contribute and enjoy our Xmas supper and join us at the DVGC Xmas function.

**Garden tasks for December – by David**

This is the time of year when you can save money by sowing seeds for your ‘winter greens’. If you grow seeds in planting modules, they can be a good size to put in position as you remove the spent pea and broad bean plants at soil level. Having these brassicas follow the legumes gives them a chance to benefit from the nitrogen nodules added to the soil.

Time to sow: Asian vegetables, carrot, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, peas, radish, silverbeet and turnip.

Last chance to sow: Beans (butter, French or runner), beetroot, broccoli, cabbage, capsicum, NZ spinach and swedes.

Time to plant: Asian vegetables, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery,

celeriac, leek and silverbeet.

Last chance to plant: Capsicum, courgette, cucumber, pumpkin-marrow-squash and tomatoes.

Too late for: Seeds or plants of corn, potatoes, rhubarb or yams.

### **Small Garden Talk by Bunnings – by David**

If you would like to access the information that Imelda Tupa'i gave us in the handout at our last meeting, it is available at <https://www.bunnings.co.nz/diy-advice/garden/planting-and-growing/how-to-start-a-garden-in-small-spaces>

Imelda printed the first two of the five pages. There are some good tips on varieties to grow and a link to hydroponics that were not included.

### **Humates – by Sue**

Successful soil re-mediator Jim O'Gorman wrote, when asked about humates, that they are a great pick-me-up for plants. They are a chelating agent, in that applications of humates will stimulate the cations (calcium, magnesium, sodium etc.) in the soil particles, releasing them for uptake by plants.

Humates occur naturally in compost and are seen as the brown colour when soil or compost is dissolved in a bucket of water. The humates referred to at our talk are sold as a wonder drug for plants. They are basically long chain carbon in a concentrated form.

From an environmental perspective, they are a non-renewable resource and should be left in the ground. Layers of the concentrated carbon material sold as humates are found between peat and coal seams and are unfortunately still mined in open cast pits in a few places, like Southland. Peat and humate are wonderful substances that our planet dearly needs. They are a carbon sink more powerful than rainforests. They provide habitat to rare plants and wading birds and purify polluted water. They are also great water sinks and prevent flooding and wildfires.

But when we start digging up peat and humates to garden with, the carbon and water sink effect gets damaged; and it starts releasing vast quantities of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and increases flooding and drying up of landscapes.

Although very effective in what they do, humate products are not necessary, if quality compost is applied on a regular basis.

Watch how Jim makes quality compost in his two videos:

<https://youtu.be/fKaSkxZJly0>

### **Taste Nature Garden visit – by Sue**



High up the hill from Waitati, with sweeping views from Blueskin Bay to the Silver Peaks, we assembled on the large green paddock of the Taste Nature Garden. The fields used to be covered in gorse, so Rodney told us, the co-owner of the 5 acres. That half of their land is in regenerating native bush was a great drawcard when choosing the site 13 years ago. While living in a caravan, the owners started building their new house and planning and establishing the plantings. Now, beside the rustic

old farmhouse are the vegetable gardens and chicken runs. A tall stand of broad beans flanks the entrance to this area. There are numerous wooden raised beds made of macrocarpa, almost all covered with white netting, to keep out the pests of insects and rabbits. This is not needed for the potatoes and the impressively green garlic plants though.

The health of the garlic plants is put down to additions of soft biochar, which Rodney makes himself in the fire. He also digs in kitchen and garden waste directly into all the beds, about 20 cm deep. He waits for the weather to warm up the soil to sow seeds straight into the beds at the appropriate times.

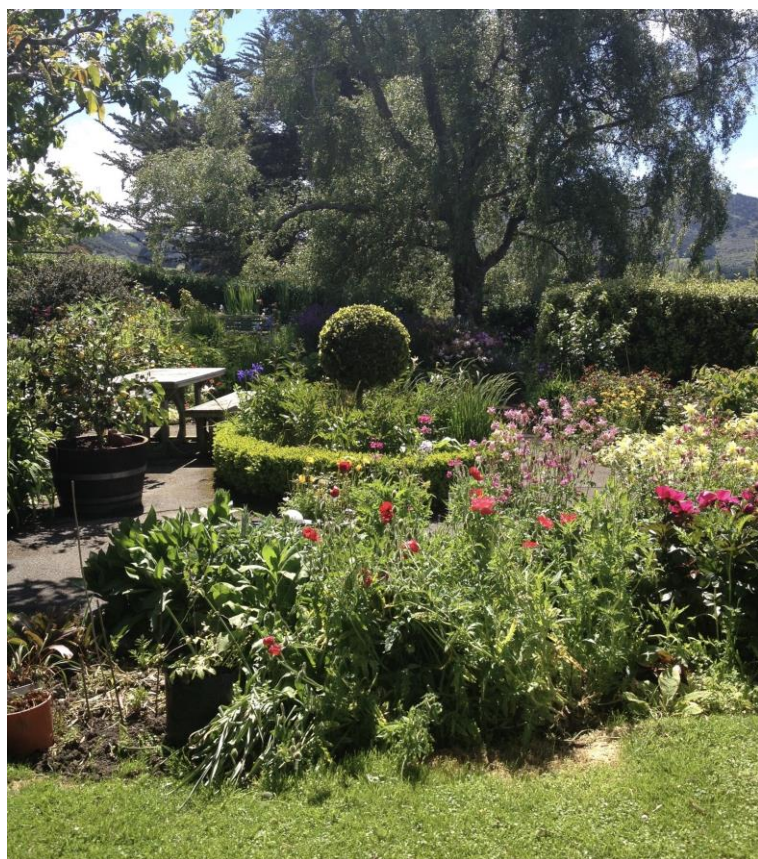
Up around the new house are more waist high raised vegetable beds, easily accessible from the kitchen.

The banks and the perimeter of the property are densely planted with an eclectic and colourful mixture of native and exotic trees and shrubs, providing shelter and privacy. Using the 'chop and drop' method has proven very successful in growing soil fertility on the clay banks. Rocks from the property have been used extensively to create beautiful walls and hold the varied plantings along a newly laid out walkway to the edge of the bush. A path meanders through this lush regenerating native forest, down to a small creek and back out to the paddock with a landscaped pond, complete with jetty and ducks. Along the drive is a small orchard.

All together, we thank Rodney for a varied and interesting tour!

### **Visit to the cottage garden of Robyn Bridges – by Sue**

The Bridges' rambling 1/2acre garden, surrounding their almost 150 year old prominent old cottage above the Otago harbour, is presently overflowing with beautiful spring flowers in wide herbaceous borders and patches of colour. There are many sheltered garden niches, spaces for fruit trees and vegetables: a shapely old walnut tree, newly established pear trees by



a well-used shade house. A raised bed of thriving garlic nestles against a hedge in a sheltered spot (Robyn is using Kay Baxter's method for growing it with ramial wood chips - chopped tips of willow, poplar or other deciduous tree branches, lime and sheep pellets). The glass house is lined with tomato and cucumber plants, all grown in bags. Brassicas, a sizeable potato plot, a gigantic celery and artichoke plant are surrounded by various apple and plum trees, names unknown. The chickens in the corner under the macrocarpa tree provide copious amounts of manure, along with sheep poo collected from a nearby farmer. The large asparagus bed has both green and purple spears popping up. A glass house is home to a rambling grapevine planted through a hole in the wall, in the soil outside.

We very much enjoyed the spring garden atmosphere and your hospitality, thanks Robyn!



## **Food Security with Perennial Plants – by Sue**

Try growing these easy-care, easy to propagate vegetables, herbs and fruits that come year after year without much fuss in your garden or in pots. No annual sowing or buying of seedlings is needed. For those who are interested in the idea of continued sharing by planting, dividing and giving surplus plants to neighbours, friends and family, free plants and/or seeds will be available at our December meeting.

If you already have surplus seedlings, cuttings or seeds of the plants we are introducing, or have previously introduced, we greatly appreciate you bringing some along for sharing.

### Arugula or Wild Rocket



is a member of the brassica family, originally from the Mediterranean. Its cerated small leaves taste peppery, spicy and nutty, unlike the ordinary milder rocket with larger leaves. Generally mixed with other salad greens, it is also enjoyed in pestos, on top of sandwiches, pasta or pizzas. It grows best in well drained soils in a sunny or shady position. It is a great green for the shoulder seasons as it grows even in cool weather and frosts. Its small yellow flowers are adored by bees.

Arugula can be grown as a tasty and attractive ground cover around fruit trees, as the roots are shallow and won't interfere with larger plant's nutrients or growth. Divide easily by cuttings, sticking stems in damp soil.

### Lovage



is a hardy perennial herb with a punchy flavour that tastes like celery and parsley, combined with a hint of aniseed and curry. The finely chopped leaves are a great addition to soups, stews, potatoes, pasta and eggs. The stem can be steamed, the roots dug up and braised in autumn and the seeds used in pickles, bread and biscuits. The leaves are easily dried in a shady warm place laid on a sheet of paper or rack – rich in salt and therefore great for blending into a homemade stock powder.

The lush plant originated in the Middle East, can grow to 2m high in rich loamy soils in a sunny or part shady position, and looks great in a flower bed. Hover flies that eat aphids love the yellow umbellifer flowers. The plant dies down in winter and emerges stronger each spring. Divide the roots early spring or autumn with some plant material and share every few years.

## Trading Table

Thanks to all who contribute to the interesting variety of plants, cuttings, seedling, seeds and materials on the trading table, very much appreciated.

## Xmas supper

Please all bring a christmassy plate of goodies to share with everyone at the next club meeting! Be it sweet or savoury – festive finger food made with ingredients from your garden or from your preserves, berries and nuts - we look forward to it!

Volunteers this month are Lorraine Farris and Helen Flockton

## From Garden to Table: Rhubarb Cake amendment to recipe - by Ruth

Attention: The rhubarb recipe shared last month has one more cup of flour than stated.

## Call for plants and produce for the Gasworks Produce and Crafts Market 2<sup>nd</sup> December



We would love to have lots of plants and produce to fill a bumper DVGC stall at the market. Please bring along any that you can spare. You can drop them off labelled at 73 Spottiswoode St Tainui in the days beforehand or bring them, as well as fresh produce, directly to the stall on the day (preferably before 10am, but later is still welcome). Proceeds will go to the local Dunedin Night Shelter this time.

For inquiries and if you need plants to be picked up, contact:  
Sue 45 44 015 / 027 225 1092

## DVGC Christmas Function

We have booked a table for forty at the Mornington Taphouse on Sunday 10th December at noon.

They will have a menu similar to their everyday one, but, not as comprehensive. Their usual menu is available at

<https://morningtontaphouse.co.nz/assets/menus/NEW-MENU-300523.pdf>

On the day members can just order and pay individually.

If you would like to attend, sign up on the clipboard at our December meeting or email [dvgcnz@gmail.com](mailto:dvgcnz@gmail.com) before December 6th.

We look forward to celebrating Christmas there with you!  
Your committee